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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000379

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/IRF, DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RECEIVES SOS MESSAGE FROM AMN'S URECHEAN

REFS: A. Chisinau 0370, B. Chisinau 0324, C. Chisinau 0304, D. 07
Chisinau 0758

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Our Moldova Alliance (AMN) leader Serafim Urechean reiterated his self-anointing as the leader of the opposition, dodged discussion of the new Prime Minister, and speculated on his chances of doing well enough in 2009 elections to attract the Christian Democrats and the Democratic Party, whose leaders he scorned as opportunists, to join a parliamentary coalition with the AMN. He accused the Communist Party of maintaining a propaganda advantage on state television, and encouraged the Ambassador to repeat his visits to the districts, and support independent media. End summary.

Urechean Predicts Electoral Success in 2009

¶2. (C) Presenting his party as the second-largest vote-getter after the Communist Party (PCRM), and himself as the leader of the opposition (ref D), in an April 2 meeting with the Ambassador Urechean speculated that, if the parliamentary elections were held now, the PCRM would gain only about 20% of the vote. Noting that the AMN controls 14 out of 20 non-PCRM district councils, he predicted that his party would come out on top in 2009. He declared that the voters would punish the PCRM and the Christian Democrats (PPCD); the latter, he said, might even fall under the five percent threshold for parliamentary representation. Urechean further noted that on his regular weekend visits to districts he hears voters accusing PPCD leader Iurie Rosca, and Democratic Party (PD) leader Dumitru Diacov, of being traitors. He added that Rosca and President Voronin were conspiring to destroy the coalitions in the non-Communist district councils. That said, Urechean declared that he was willing to form a post-election coalition with the two non-Communist parties that come in second and third behind the AMN next year. (Note: He did not want to predict which parties they would be. End note.) Urechean agreed with the Ambassador that overseas polling and electronic voter lists locally offered too many possibilities for interference with the voting and the counting of ballots.

Urechean Dodges Question about the New PM

¶3. (C) Stating that he had mentored new Prime Minister Greceanii (ref B) in earlier years, he dodged a question about her honesty, but did not hold back in his criticism of former PM Tarlev and former Interior Minister Papuc as extravagantly corrupt. He did admit that Greceanii was the best candidate for the job, but circumscribed in her powers, because the prosecutor, police, and intelligence service are all under Voronin's direct control.

Urechean Thankful for IRI, NDI Training

¶4. (C) Urechean agreed with the Ambassador that it was a good thing not to have 17 parties vying for seats in Parliament, and thanked him

for IRI and NDI training which convinced parties of the need for door-to-door campaigning, and assisted the formation of coalitions in district councils after June 2007 elections. He also thanked the Ambassador for his pre-election visits last year to 17 of the 31 districts in the country, noting that the visits helped overcome the government's monopoly of information on the one television outlet available in the countryside.

Help Requested for Independent TV Channel

¶5. (C) Urechean stated that Moldovans, especially outside the cities, rely on, and trust, television for their information. And, in parliamentary elections, which he said are political as opposed to the personality-based local elections, media access for candidates is crucial. Lamenting his party's chronic lack of resources, he asked for help in financing a small cable TV network. The Ambassador, stressing U.S. neutrality on elections, and our concern that all voters have enough information to make informed voting decisions, encouraged him to call on Public Affairs to inquire into Democracy Commission small grants.

¶6. (C) Asked whether he had been briefed, as promised, by Reintegration Minister Sova regarding Transnistrian negotiations (Ref A), Urechean said that he had not, and promised, at the Ambassador's request, to let us know by the end of the week if there had been no contact.

¶7. (C) Comment: At the end of the meeting, Urechean passed the Ambassador a piece of paper on which he had written "S.O.S." Given Urechean's confidence that the AMN will poll the most votes in 2009, this may have been somewhat overly dramatic. Given his concerns about Voronin's ability to play rough to win, however, the signal might be expressing his genuine fears. End comment.

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Kirby